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REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE BOB BERGLAND AT THE ANNUAL FACULTY RECEPTION OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, USDA, ON SEPTEMBER 6, 1977

To the distinguished guests, and that includes all of you here tonight, I am truly honored and proud to be part of these proceedings. Sarah Weddington did not mention that I was employed by the Department of Agriculture during the 1960's. For seven years I was with ASCS; took instruction from Charlie Murphy, Joe Robertson, Carl Barnes and others and, in fact, participated in at least two courses conducted by the Graduate School and so I know something whereof I speak.

I hold this organization in the highest regard. I am here to pay tribute, to the extent I can, to those of you who give up your evenings and your otherwise spare time and dedicate it to the cause of continuing education. With a special tribute to those of you who are the spouse of one who has given up an evening. You are the ones that we really should be honoring here tonight. Those of you who stay home when your husband or your wife goes off, for not much pay, really contributing to a cause which is better described as a labor of love. I want you to know that we in the Secretary's office and in the entire organization of the Department of Agriculture hold you in the highest regard and I thank you very, very much for your many contributions.

Public service is a most difficult lot and I know this has been described time and again but it is, I think, worth repeating, "public employees live in a goldfish bowl." Every action you take is examined very carefully by the general public and every decision you'll ever make or ever have made will be second-guessed. So public service is, in my judgment, a noble calling to which many refuse to respond because they do not have the capacity nor the courage to live in the environment which public employees are required by the nature of the job. Oftentimes articles are written denouncing an employee, here and there, for dereliction of duty. There was one recently in a daily newspaper, I shall not repeat the name of the paper nor the author, but this particular employee made a tour of the Department of Agriculture and found one or two persons who, on that given day, weren't as busy as they ought to have been. This story was repeated across the United States and it generated a good deal of mail. It was disconcerting and discouraging to the thousands of employees who donate their time and work evenings and Saturdays free of charge in the administration of the many duties assigned to the Department of Agriculture. But that cross was carried.

Government is unique in that we have to be ready for emergencies. I don't hear a fire whistle right now, do you? No fire in town. I suspect, therefore, that we have several hundred firemen who are not doing that for which they have been hired at this moment. We are not at war and yet we have an Army. We need to be prepared. We need to be ready, be able to cope with any circumstance which may arise. Government, therefore, and government employees must be prepared and this is not an easy matter.

The only thing certain these days is that tomorrow will not be like yesterday. For some that means we have an exciting new frontier dawning on the morrow. For some, however, it is a threat. A threat to the security that comes from habit and we are all by our nature creatures of habit. We would prefer that tomorrow would be like yesterday because we've lived that. We know what yesterday meant to us and for us. For the more timid souls, tomorrow will be a threat to that security as we have no idea what tomorrow will bring. But

we know that tomorrow will change. Therefore this Graduate School, those of you who have made these enormous contributions and are doing so on a continuing basis, are providing employees, not just of the Department of Agriculture, of course, but providing employees, public servants, with the kind of update, the kind of information which they need in order to be able to adjust and adapt to tomorrow and regard tomorrow as an exciting challenge and not be afraid.

In the Department of Agriculture we, of course, are constantly reminded of the kinds of changes which are bound to come, like it or not. The question is not whether there will be change but whether or not we have the capacity to live with change.

I'm 48 years old and in my lifetime the world's population has doubled. In my lifetime we've invented hybrid seed corn, fuel, pesticides, fertilizers, and machinery, and yields have doubled and tripled. If God gives me 35 more years to live, the world's food demands will double again. We've seen the beginning of the end of some of these non-renewable resources. The challenges therefore are enormous.

The question is whether or not we have the capacity to adjust or adapt to these changing times. There's no doubt in my mind that we can. I'm convinced when I look over the caliber of those of you who serve the Graduate School and who have served for so many years, that we will adapt to these changing times. So I want to pay tribute to each of you, not just on tonight but in any way that I and/or those in my office or in the Department of Agriculture can to recognize you and make your job easier because we'll all share that which you do. You are leaving a mark, you are leaving a legacy, you are giving us something that we cannot buy--that service which you provide is truly a labor of love. Because you do this freely, because you make these contributions, we have a product which is durable. I recall from my experience as a participant in some of these courses, the impression I got from those who were instructing, that indeed you were interested in me as a student, you were interested in this government, you were interested in this world--you are interesting. Interesting, fascinating people. It's that sort of characteristic, I think, that brings us together. That you are interesting and curious and that quality is a mark which we cannot buy but a mark which you all possess. It is because of that quality that the Graduate School has achieved the successes which have been enumerated by Dr. Holden and others and it is that quality which I know will continue to set up the Graduate School as probably the leading university in continuing education in the United States.

About three months ago in a cabinet meeting, the role of the Graduate School was raised by the President who asked me whether or not this program is as successful as it had been and I could assure him that it is better, if that's possible, because it has broadened its horizons. He, at that time, asked if there was anything that he, President Jimmy Carter, could do to help this organization. I told him that at the moment I was not aware of anything that he might do but I have written the offer down. We have taken a raincheck on it. If there is anything that you, through your representative, believe that this Administration can do to make this organization more effective, all you need do is let us know and we'll do the best we can.

And so with that I want to say again how proud I am of the work you do. Thank you very much for inviting me to these proceedings on this evening.

I understand from here we're going to share in the benefit of your work, a buffet. If it had not been for instructors we would not have these benefits. I am looking forward to getting to meet each of you if this is possible on this evening, if not tonight, certainly tomorrow or sometime in the not too distant future.

Thank you very much.

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